

Belper Active Travel Master Plan

Comments from Derby Cycling Group

Updated: 3rd December 2023

Derby Cycling Group is a long standing group which campaigns for a cohesive cycle network in and around Derby and champions cycling to create an environment where it is safe, normal, convenient and fun. <https://derbycyclinggroup.org.uk/> The Group has approx. 350 members covering the wider Derby area (including Belper).

Members with an interest in Belper were invited to provide their comments which have been incorporated into this document. It is understood that there are plans for there to be a general public consultation on the “masterplan” early in 2024.

The comments below are generally focused on cycling rather than other methods of active travel.

General Comments

A common suggestion is that the connectivity of Belper to nearby destinations is key to improving the environment for cycling. In particular, the creation of a link from Belper to Derby that avoids forcing cyclists to use the A6 is essential. This is a goal of the Derwent Valley Cycleway - <https://www.derwentvalleytrust.org.uk/cycle/>

The geography of Belper includes a number of steep hills. Often the only method of cycling around the town is to cycle up some of these steep roads. As they are often narrow, the presence of slow moving (as climbing uphill) cyclists causes motorists to become frustrated and, often, to intimidate the cyclists. Providing a dedicated cycle route (segregated from the motorists) for the uphill busy roads would help address this problem. Cyclists travelling downhill are much less of a problem as they can often travel at the speed of the rest of the traffic and thus cycling infrastructure can be focused on the uphill side of the road.

It is understood that various proposals are being examined for the Belper Mills – whatever is decided as a way forward, the important thing to note is that the Mills will become an important destination (and source if residential provision is part of the solution) for journeys. This need to be considered in any planning.

Identification of major destinations within the town is necessary to understand where the demand is for cycling access. These destinations should include all schools, hospital, shopping areas, major employers, train and bus stations, leisure centre and other centres for sports, River Gardens, Strutts, and the cemetery amongst other destinations.

Specific Issues

The point above about slow moving cyclists on busy, narrow, uphill roads applies to a number of places in Belper including:

- A609 between Morrisons and Belper market place
- A517 Bridge Hill
- B6013 Chesterfield Road
- Belper Lane
- Red Lane (between Makeney and Holbrook) if this is within scope

As well as providing an alternative segregated route for cyclists travelling uphill, signage could be installed to encourage motorists to be more patient and to allow sufficient room for overtaking.

The A6 through Belper is totally unsuitable for cycling and walking as the space is too narrow and there is too much traffic (including large lorries). Bridge Street cannot accommodate two large lorries passing and traffic often needs to mount the pavement. The pavements are narrow requiring pedestrians to step into the road to pass each other. A “bypass” for cycles and pedestrians is needed to provide an alternative to the A6 for north / south travel through the town.

The roundabout at Morrisons (A6 junction with A609) is intimidating for cyclists.

Car parking on both sides of roads making the available space narrow is a problem in a number of places including Nottingham Road.

The road surface is very poor in some places. The estate around Long Row, George Street, etc. could provide quiet back road routes but the surface is currently unuseable for most types of cycles.

Some back roads around Belper are blighted by excessive travel speeds and enforcement of speed limits would improve the environment. In particular, Crich Lane would benefit from speed cameras.

Crich Lane would also benefit from a footpath to protect pedestrians from the fast traffic.

A number of the existing footpaths within Belper need to be given a good tarmac surface. Where possible these should also be opened up to cycle traffic. In particular, the path between Bullsmoor and Belper Park is heavily used by Belper School children. The path from Cherry Tree Avenue to the junction of Marsh Lane and Crich Lane is also well used.

A footpath connects Dalley Lane (a reasonable route for cyclists) with Mount Pleasant Drive and could provide a solution allowing avoidance of Bridge Hill. A bridlepath connects Wyver Lane towards Belper Lane End but needs extensive improvement to the surface to make it useful as a route.

Specific Opportunities

Wyver Lane has been upgraded and resurfaced and provides a flat quiet route towards the north. However at the moment the route ends at Lawn Cottage and the route is a cul-de-sac. There is the opportunity to extend the route northwards to link with Holly Lane near Ambergate and this would provide an alternative link to Belper from the north allowing for avoidance of the A6.

The Derwent Valley Trust is in the process of proposing a multi-use route on the west bank of the River Derwent between Bridgefoot and the sewage works near Goods Road. This route would also offer links into the town centre. This route could provide a “bypass” to cycling on the A6 through the town centre.

A bridleway runs from Wyver Lane towards Belper Lane End. The surface is currently poor and often covered in cattle manure but this could provide an alternative to Belper Lane (although it involves a hill).

A bridleway (Kirks Lane) runs between Sandbed Lane and Mill Lane but currently has a poor surface. With improvement this could improve the cycle network.

Designation of some of the quieter back roads around Belper as Quiet Lanes would make them more attractive for walking and cycling. Even more so if measures beyond simple signage are put in place to reduce speeds and encourage more careful driving.

Infrastructure to allow travelling around Belper is important but safety and security when reaching the destination is also important. Secure cycle parking needs to be provided (at low or zero cost) at key destinations including the shopping centres, the station, the major employers and schools.

Many areas would benefit from 20mph zones including Chesterfield Road. The implementation of 20 mph zones needs to go beyond just signage with road changes (e.g. planters, chicanes, signage, ...) made to make the “appropriate speed” 20mph rather than just relying on enforcement which is often not a police priority.